Parks and Recreation Commission

Park Master Plan 2017

Worthington
PARKS & RECREATION

Table of Contents

Introduction 1
Methodology 2
Department Overview 4
Current Park Overview 6
Benchmarking Information 11
Park Trends 15
Media Strategy, Survey Results 16
Playground Challenges 22
Park Maintenance Challenges 24
Planning the Future of our Parks 26
General/Non-Park Specific Recommendations 45
Most Critical Park Improvements 46
Future Park Planning 47
Maintenance Related Recommendations 49
Funding Options 50
Conclusions 51

Introduction

The Worthington Parks and Recreation Commission, with the support of the Worthington Parks and Recreation Department, has completed a process of long range planning for the Department. The process was broken into three phases:

1. **Education/Research**
2. **Identifying Needs**
3. **Park by Park Planning**

Worthington Parks and Recreation has a proud history of park development and upkeep. Dating back to the first Worthington park established in 1803, the Village Green, green space and outdoor recreation have been important to Worthington's residents. Although Godown Park was recently added to our inventory, it is no secret that as a land-locked community, Worthington's days of consistently adding and developing new park land are behind us. With that in mind, having a plan dedicated to maintaining our existing parks, meeting the needs of residents, and benchmarked effectively with other progressive cities is vitally important. This plan endeavors to provide City Council and the residents of Worthington prioritized park improvements for the years to come in an organized and strategic planning document.

Methodology

The Parks and Recreation Commission completed the following steps in putting together the Parks Master Plan:

I. Education/Research

A. Park Inventory Analysis and Benchmarking

Commission members toured each of the parks with staff and also reviewed park amenity information. Members also viewed a presentation and reviewed benchmarking materials from the International City/County Managers Association's (ICMA) Center for Performance Measurement which provided analysis of how Worthington compares to other communities in terms of park resources provision.

B. Park by Park Maintenance Analysis

Parks maintenance staff presented a park by park analysis of maintenance demands and challenges for Commission members. These maintenance needs were documented and provided to members for their consideration.

C. Trends in Parks

Staff gathered research on trends in parks and presented it to Commission members.

Methodology cont.

II. Identifying Needs

A. Playground Challenges - One planning session was spent framing and discussing how to maintain 14 playgrounds given the current funding levels, life span, and community standards.

B. Resident Survey – A survey and public meeting had been conducted as a part of the original Vision 2020 process so a survey was designed to build off those results, gather community feedback from general park users and not just special interest groups, and to create community engagement.

C. Brainstorm Wish Lists/Ideas – A brainstorming session was held where members listed projects and improvements by park including their own ideas, items from the maintenance presentation, and items picked up from the survey of residents.

D. Community Open Houses – Commission members and staff hosted a series of open houses where draft recommendations of park improvements were displayed for public feedback. The open houses were held in the lobby of the Community Center. The drafts were also shared on the City's website and through social media for residents to view and provide comments on-line.

III. Park by Park Planning

A. Park by Park Ranking – Members completed a survey to rank the projects in order of importance for each park and overall.

B. Park by Park Subjective Discussions – Members followed up the survey ranking process by having subjective discussions on each park and what priorities and overall park plans made the most sense in order of priorities.

C. Final Listing of Projects – Projects were finalized by members and a final listing was completed by park.

IV. Other Key Steps Taken

A. Historical Financing Reference – Staff researched and provided members with an overview of park project financing.

B. Operating Budget Impact Evaluation – Staff provided members an analysis of the operating budget impacts of various projects being recommended.

C. Alignment with Other Planning Documents – A review was completed to determine how the recommendations developed in this plan corresponded with other key planning documents such as the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Department Overview

Worthington PARKS & RECREATION

Mission Statement

To create community through exceptional parks, programs, facilities, and events.

Vision

WORTHINGTON PARKS & RECREATION WILL:

Provide safe, family friendly environments.

Be a leader in customer service.

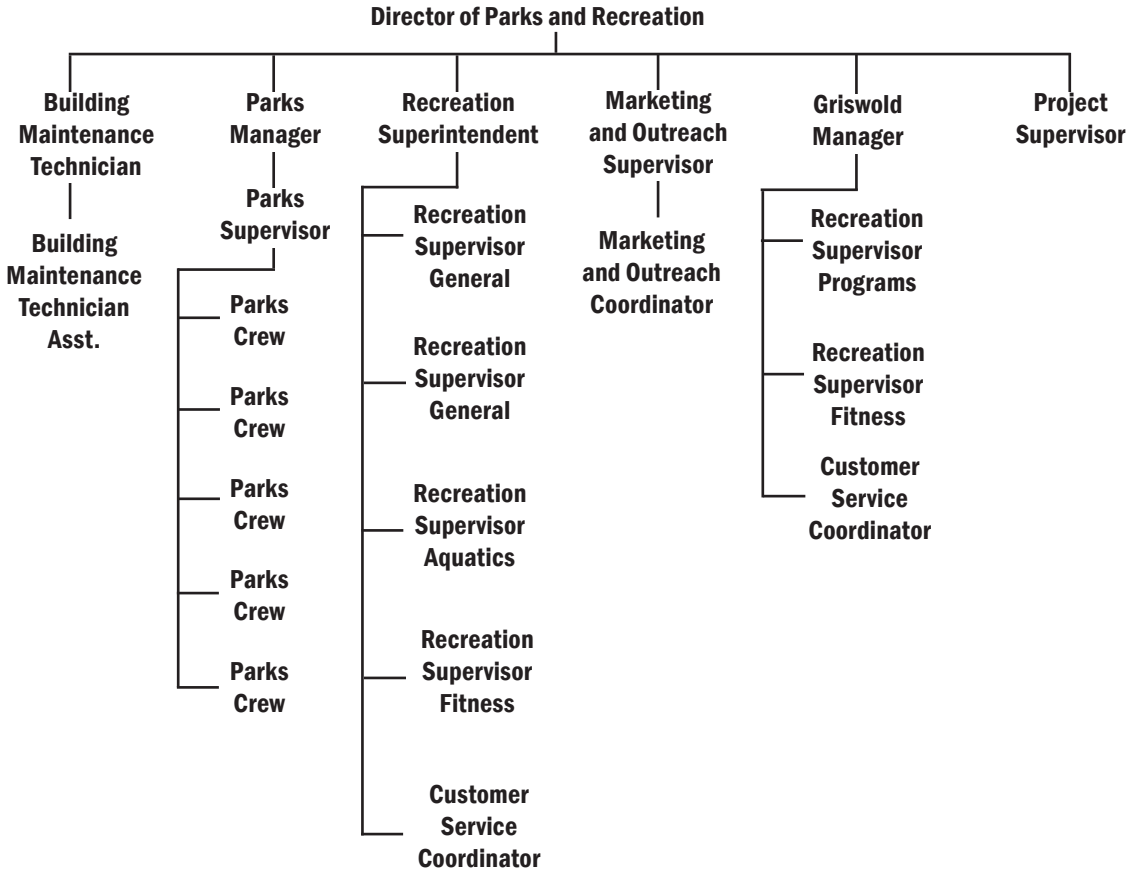
Provide exceptional maintenance and cleanliness.

Lead in community health and wellness.

Provide innovative parks and recreation.

Be positive people providing fun interactions.

Strive for sustainable practices.



Department Overview

Community Center • 345 E. Wilson Bridge Road
Operating Budget: $2,834,704

This 72,000-square-foot Community Center near the heart of Worthington maintains two gymnasiums, an art room, a pottery studio, public meeting rooms, pools and an indoor track and fitness floor and is the administrative hub for the Parks and Recreation Department.

Griswold Center • 777 High Street
Operating Budget: $603,637

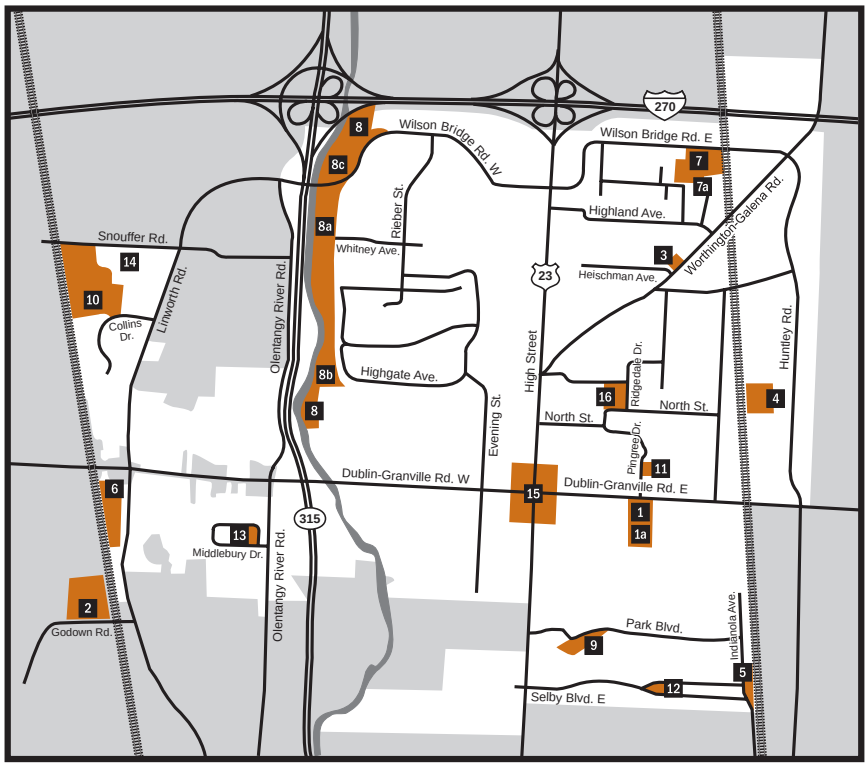
The Griswold Center is dedicated to providing quality programs and services to people 55 years of age or older and their spouses, regardless of age. The Griswold Center offers a balance of programs in arts, drama, sports, fitness and education, along with a variety of trips! Located in the heart of Worthington, this beautiful facility encompasses a fitness room, large multi-purpose room, art room and a variety of cozy meeting spaces.

Worthington Parks
Operating Budget: $1,126,564

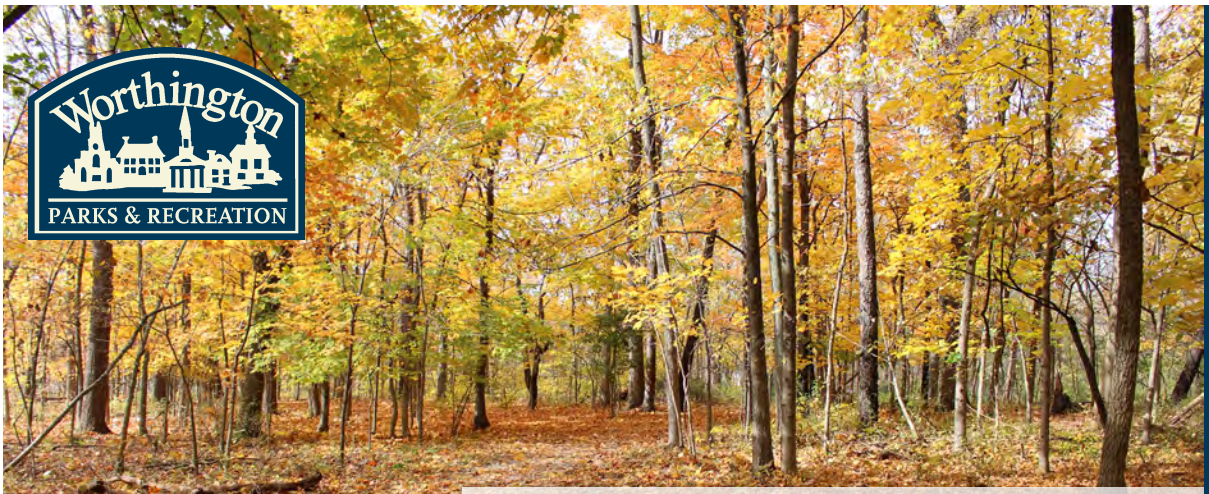
Worthington Parks Crew consists of a Parks Manager, Parks Supervisor and five Parks Technicians, along with seasonal part-time help. This crew is well educated, possessing a variety of certifications, including three ISA certified arborists (two of which are also ornamental shade tree experts), three certified playground safety instructors, two turf specialists, and licensed pesticide applicators. The Parks Crew is responsible for City parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, urban forestry, holiday decorations, city parking lot snow removal and downtown plantings and beautification.

Current Conditions

The City of Worthington maintains more than 221 acres of developed and natural public areas. Neighborhood parks and playgrounds are conveniently located throughout the community within easy walking distance for everyone. Each park is designed for different purposes and offers a unique experience in athletics, passive recreation, natural vegetation, and wildlife. Below is a chart listing all of the parks and detailing the amenities each offers. In addition, the map indicates the location and distribution of parks throughout Worthington.



Worthington Parks ■ Available Facilities ⬢ Enclosed Facilities		Ball Diamond	Basketball Court / Hoop	Bike / Recreation Path	Dog Park	Drinking Fountain	Lacrosse Field	Nature Area / Trail	Picnic Tables	Playground	Shelter House	Sledding	Soccer Field	Tennis Court	Tot Lot	Volleyball	Wildflowers	Acres
East Granville Park: *245 E. Granville Rd.* **1a**: Moses Wright Nature Area	1					■		■	■	■	■				■		■	8
Godown Park: *6099 Godown Rd.*	2				■	■												10
Heischman Park: *6744 Worthington-Galena Rd.*	3					■			■	■					■			1
Huntley Bowl Park: *6199 Huntley Rd.*	4								■			■	■					7
Indianola Park: *5500 Indianola Ave.*	5		■						■	■			■	■	■			3
Linworth Park: *5971 Linworth Rd.*	6	■	■	■		■			■	■	■		■	■	■			13
McCord Park: *333–345 East Wilson Bridge Rd.* **7a**: Community Center & All Children's Playground	7	■	⬢			■			■	■	■		■		■	⬢		30
Olentangy River Parklands: *600 W. Wilson Bridge Rd.* **8a**: Whitney Playground **8b**: Highgate Playground **8c**: Winding Adventure Skate Park	8		■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	104
Park Boulevard Park: *125 Park Blvd.*	9							■	■			■					■	7
Perry Park: *2300 Collins Dr.*	10	■		■		■			■	■	■		■		■			21
Pingree Park: *374 Pingree Dr.*	11		■	■		■			■	■			■					1
Selby Park: *358 Selby Blvd. South*	12		■			■			■	■	⬢				■			2
Shaker Square Park: *888 Middlebury Ct.*	13		■						■	■					■			1
Snouffer Park: *2341 Snouffer Rd.*	14	■				■			■				■			■		10
Village Green: *Corners of High St. & Dublin-Granville Rd.*	15					■												3
Wilson Hill Park: *1025 Ridgedale Dr. East*	16		■	■		■			■	■	■			■	■			3



East Granville Park containing Moses Wright Nature Area

established 1972

The 7.8-acre East Granville Park is a wonderful spot for viewing wildflowers throughout the year. This park features a playground, tot lot, shelter house, drinking fountain and picnic tables. It also includes the Moses Wright Nature Area, a woodland with trails. The land originally belonged to renowned Worthington lawyer and Judge James E. Wright and his heirs, including his son Moses Wright.

Godown Park

established 2012 in partnership with the City of Columbus

Godown Park is a 10 acre park primarily developed as a dog park and consists of a one-acre small dog area, a four-and-a-half acre large dog area and also includes benches, a dog water fountain, pathways winding through the park and a paved parking lot. The land was acquired in 2000 and previously used by the Parks Department as a tree nursery. The park is open from dawn to dusk. Considerable support and fund raising were provided by W.O.O.F. (Worthington Organized Off-leash Friends).

Heischman Park
established 1966

The 1.4-acre Heischman Park is located along Worthington-Galena Road. This small neighborhood park includes a playground, tot lot, picnic tables and a drinking fountain. The playground was renovated in 2016. Now utilized by neighboring residents, we know that pioneers traveled this way before. While digging in some flower beds, a parks crew technician found an old iron horseshoe from times past.

Huntley Bowl Park
established 1986

Huntley Bowl Park is located in Worthington's industrial area and was primarily created as a retention basin for rainwater. The park is 28 feet deep and has a total of 7.5 acres, 3.5 of which are located at the bottom of the bowl as an athletic field. This field is used for soccer and rugby games and occasionally for archery tournaments. One side of the bowl has been modified and functions as a sledding hill. Other amenities include picnic tables and a parking lot at the top of the bowl.

Indianola Park
established 1964

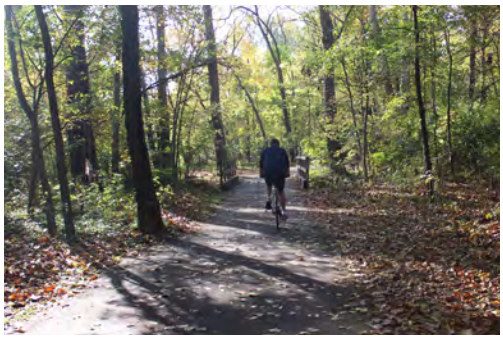
Located along some very active train tracks, Indianola Park is an excellent site for watching trains chug by- a favorite pastime of many youngsters and adults. This 3.2-acre park features a basketball court, tennis courts, soccer field, playground, tot lot, and picnic tables. Renovations to this park, including a new playground, were completed during the summer of 2012.

Linworth Park
established 1998

Linworth Park is 13-acres and boasts a variety of facilities, including a ball diamond, soccer field, basketball court, playground, tot lot, tennis courts and a drinking fountain. The park also features a trail through and around the park for those who enjoy in-line skating, jogging or walking. The Dublin-Worthington Rotary Club donated and built a shelter house which covers four picnic tables.

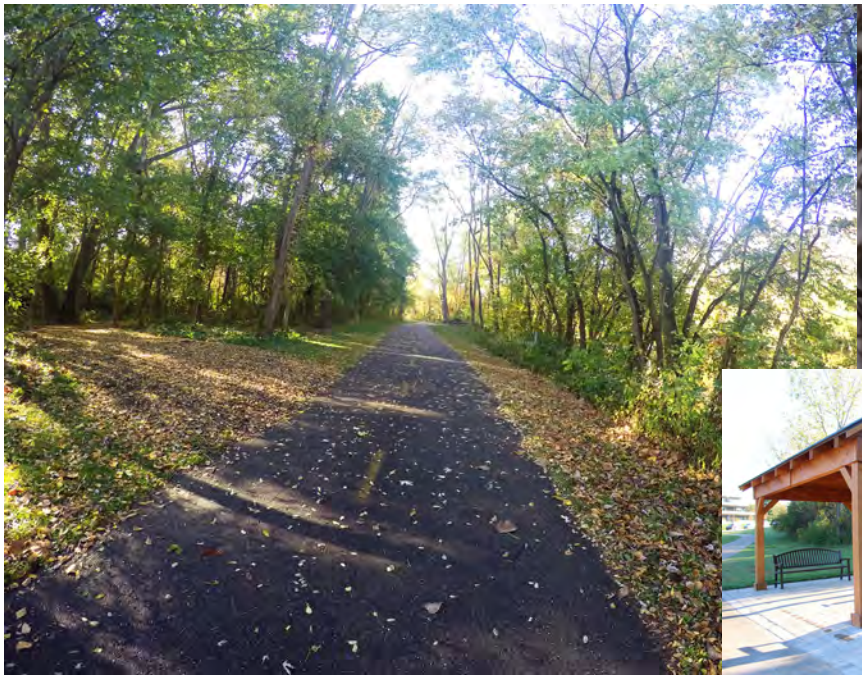
McCord Park
established 1975

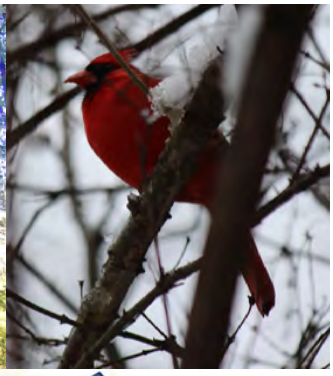
McCord Park is 25-acres and located adjacent to the Worthington Community Center. It was built primarily as an athletic complex and is home to various sports leagues and activities. The park features softball fields, a soccer field, basketball court, two playgrounds, tot lot, a Community Garden and a shelter house that includes restrooms and picnic tables.



Olentangy River Parklands
established 1974

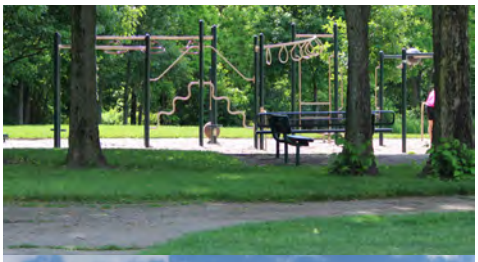
The Olentangy River Parklands boasts more than two miles of multi-use trail that wind serenely along the Olentangy River, shaded by large sycamore trees. This is a popular trail often used by those who love to bike, jog, in-line skate or just leisurely walk while enjoying the scenery. This 100-acre parkland is a true resource for the people and wildlife of Worthington. Besides the trail it also contains tennis courts, soccer fields, Winding Adventures Skate Park (added in 2001), two neighborhood playgrounds with swings and tot lots and river access for kayaks and canoes. This is a wonderful park for observing spring wildflowers and fall colors on the magnificent old trees that line the river. At one time, this was a major route of transportation for Native Americans.





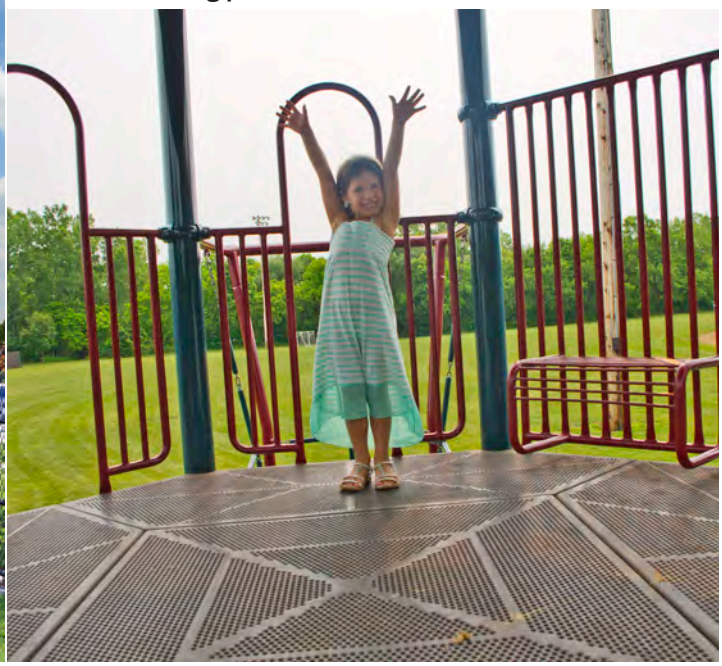
Park Boulevard Park
established 1973

Park Boulevard Park was originally known as Devil's Hill Park because of the steep incline at the back of the park. This 6.1-acre park boasts interesting geography, stream exploration along Rush Creek, woods, green space and picnic tables. Park Boulevard Park is a wonderful spot for sledding during winter months.



Perry Park
established 1979

The 22-acre Perry Park is primarily an athletic facility that includes three lighted ball diamonds (the outfields are also used as soccer fields), a shelter house, two playgrounds, drinking fountains, restrooms and picnic tables. This park also has walking paths that connect it to Snouffer Park.



Pingree Park
established 1965

Pingree Park is one of Worthington's original neighborhood parks. This 1.7-acre park is equipped with a variety of amenities, including a basketball court, playground, tot lot and artificial climbing rock. It also features open green space with picnic tables and a drinking fountain.

Selby Park
established 1964

Selby Park is situated in the middle of a quaint neighborhood. In 1941, this 4.7-acre piece of land was plotted as a park, but wasn't developed until 1964. Selby Park features an enclosed shelter house with restrooms, a playground, tot lot, picnic tables, drinking fountain and plenty of green space. The shelter house and playground were both renovated in 2000. Selby Shelter House can fit up to 40 people comfortably and is the only park shelter that can be reserved. This park also hosts Colonial Hills Civic Association's Fourth of July festivities and is often the site of summer day camp and program activities for children.

Shaker Square Park
established 1972

This park may be one of Worthington's best kept secrets! Shaker Square is a 1.3-acre park tucked away in the middle of the Middlebury Estates neighborhood. It is a quiet park whose amenities include a basetball court, playground, tot lot and picnic tables.

Snouffer Park
established 2001

Snouffer Park is a 10-acre tract jointly operated by Worthington Schools and the City of Worthington. It is located between Phoenix Middle School and Perry Park. The park has two ball diamonds (the outfields are also used as soccer fields), a sand volleyball court, drinking fountain and picnic tables. This park provides recreational opportunities for both school programs and summer leagues. The adjacent Perry Land Lab provides a place to explore nature's wonders along meandering Potter's Creek.

Village Green
established 1803

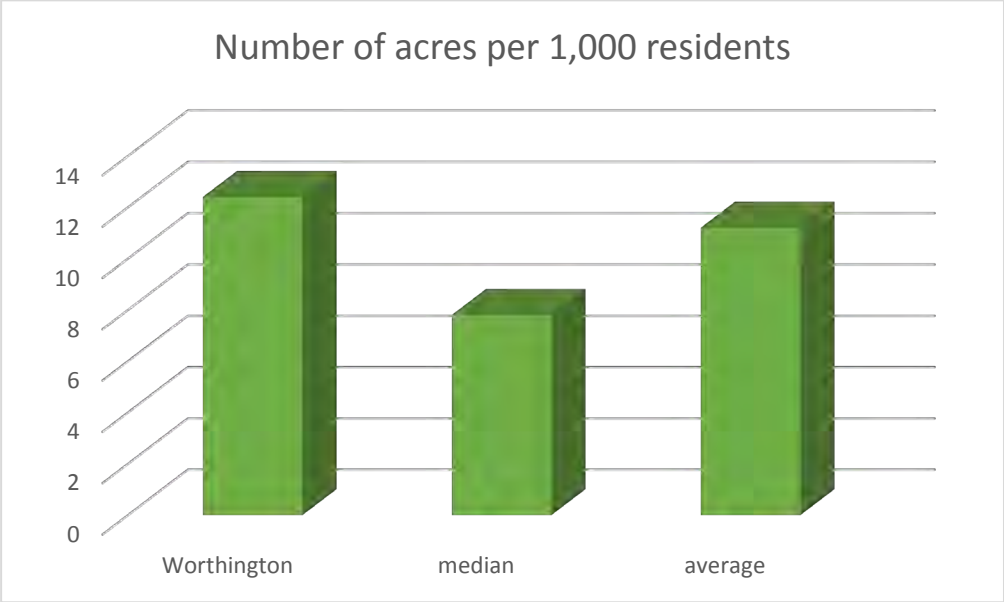
The 3.5-acre Village Green is located in the middle of downtown Worthington and is an important part of our New England heritage. Worthington forefathers initially set this area aside in 1803. Originally, it was used as an open pasturage and grazing area for farmers when they came into town. The Village Green's walkways are lined with brick. The bricks on the northwest quadrant bear the names of early pioneers. The southeast quadrant of the green is the location of Worthington's holiday tree. The green is now often used for festivals, concerts and the summer farmer's market.

Wilson Hill Park

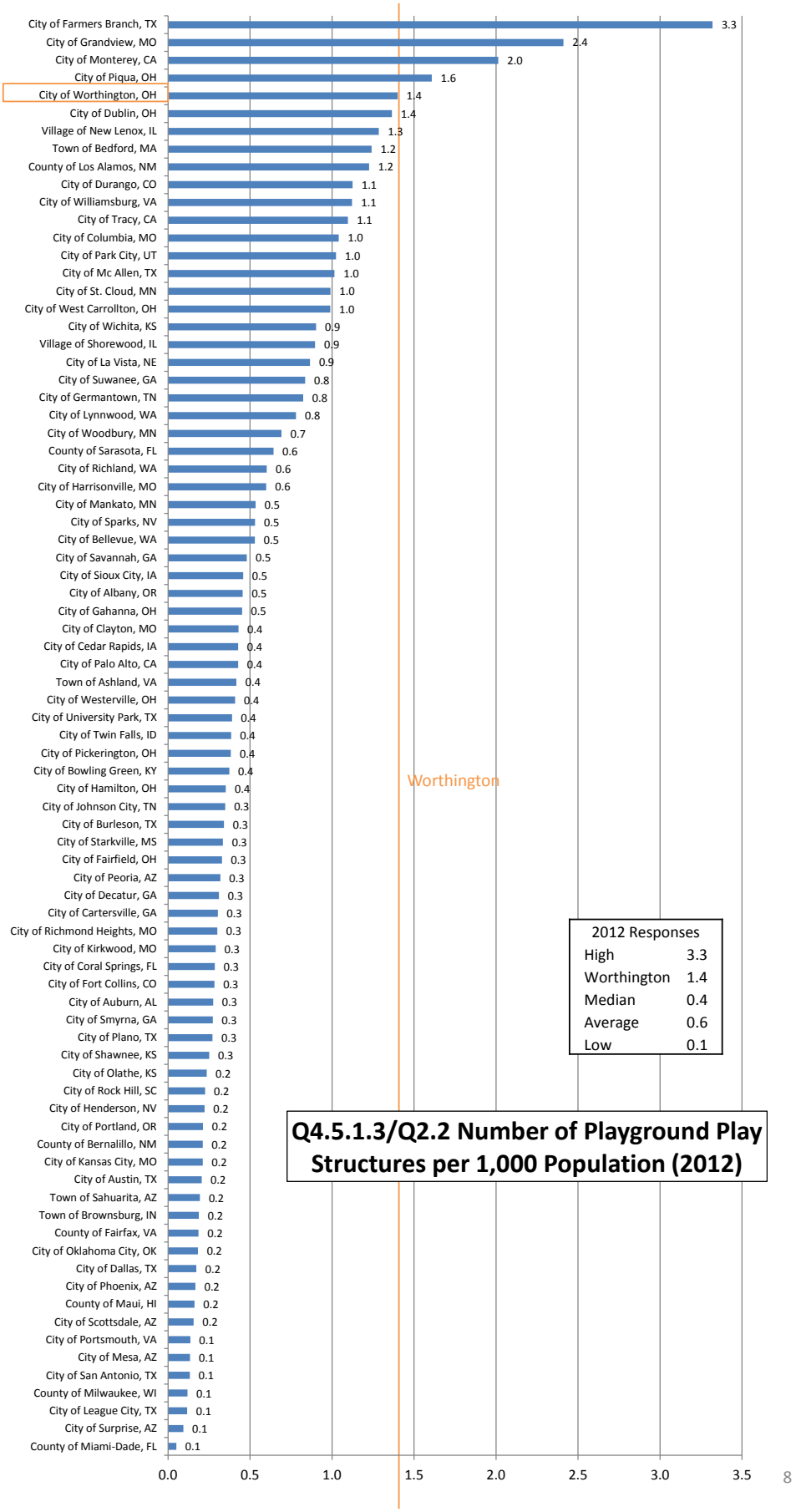
Wilson Hill Park is the site of an old trolley car line. Rows of parallel trees now mark where the old tracks used to lie. This was the inner urban line that formerly ran from Columbus to Delaware. This 3-acre park features a basketball court, tennis courts, a playground, tot lot, shelter house, drinking fountain, and picnic tables. It also includes a walking path and green space and is a popular spot for summer camp activity.

Benchmarking Information

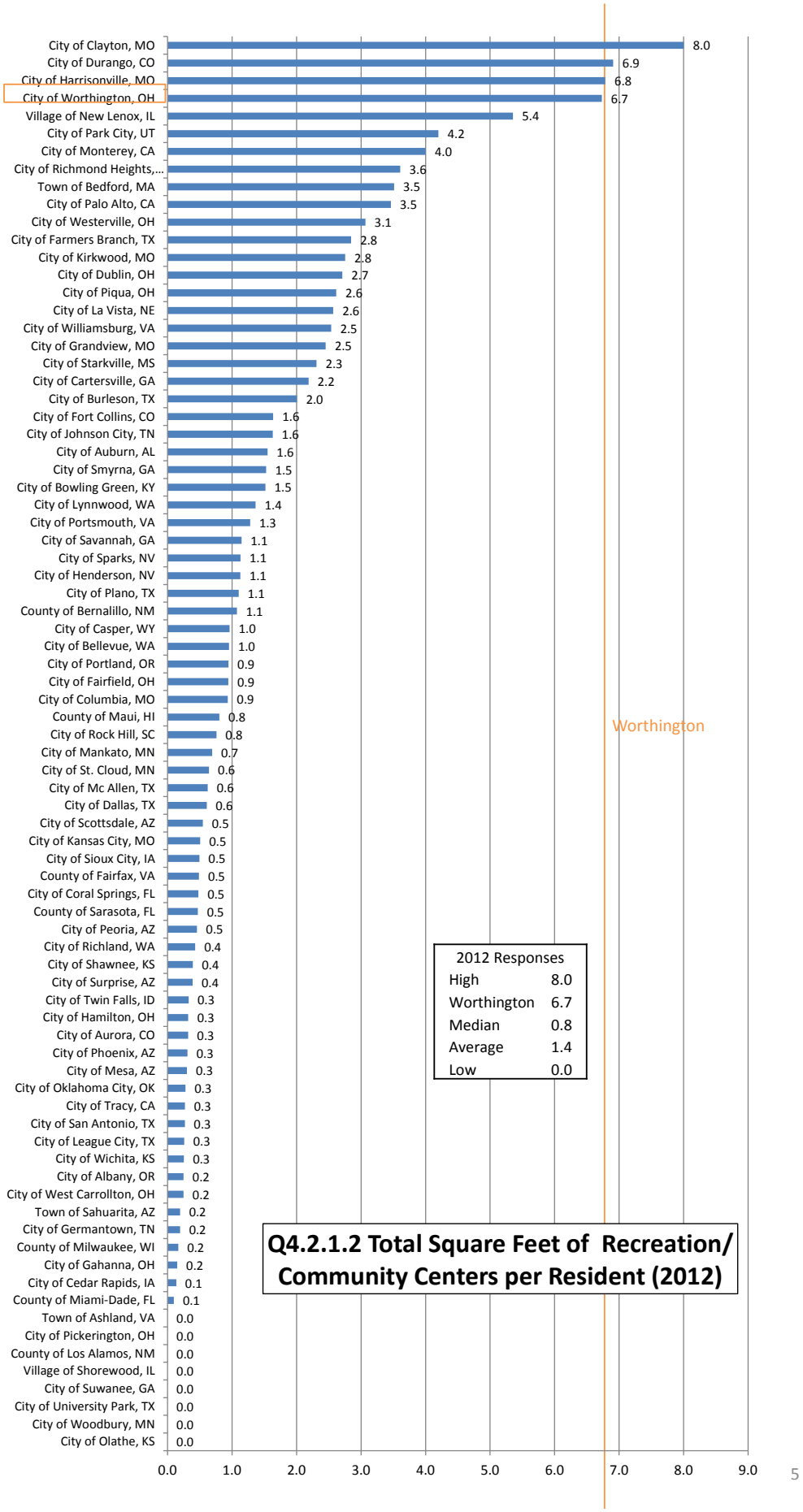
Staff presented and reviewed benchmarking materials from the International City/County Managers Association's (ICMA) Center for Performance Measurement which provided analysis of how Worthington compares to other communities in terms of park resources. While Worthington was above average in all categories relating to parks, it performed particularly well in several areas. Out of 81 cities, Worthington was above average in the amount of developed park acreage per 1,000 people, coming in at 12.4 acres per 1,000 residents (the median was 7.8 and the average 11.2). The city also rated highly (per 1,000 residents) in number of tennis courts (1st), square feet of recreation/community center (4th), number of playground structures (5th), basketball courts (5th) and athletic fields (8th).



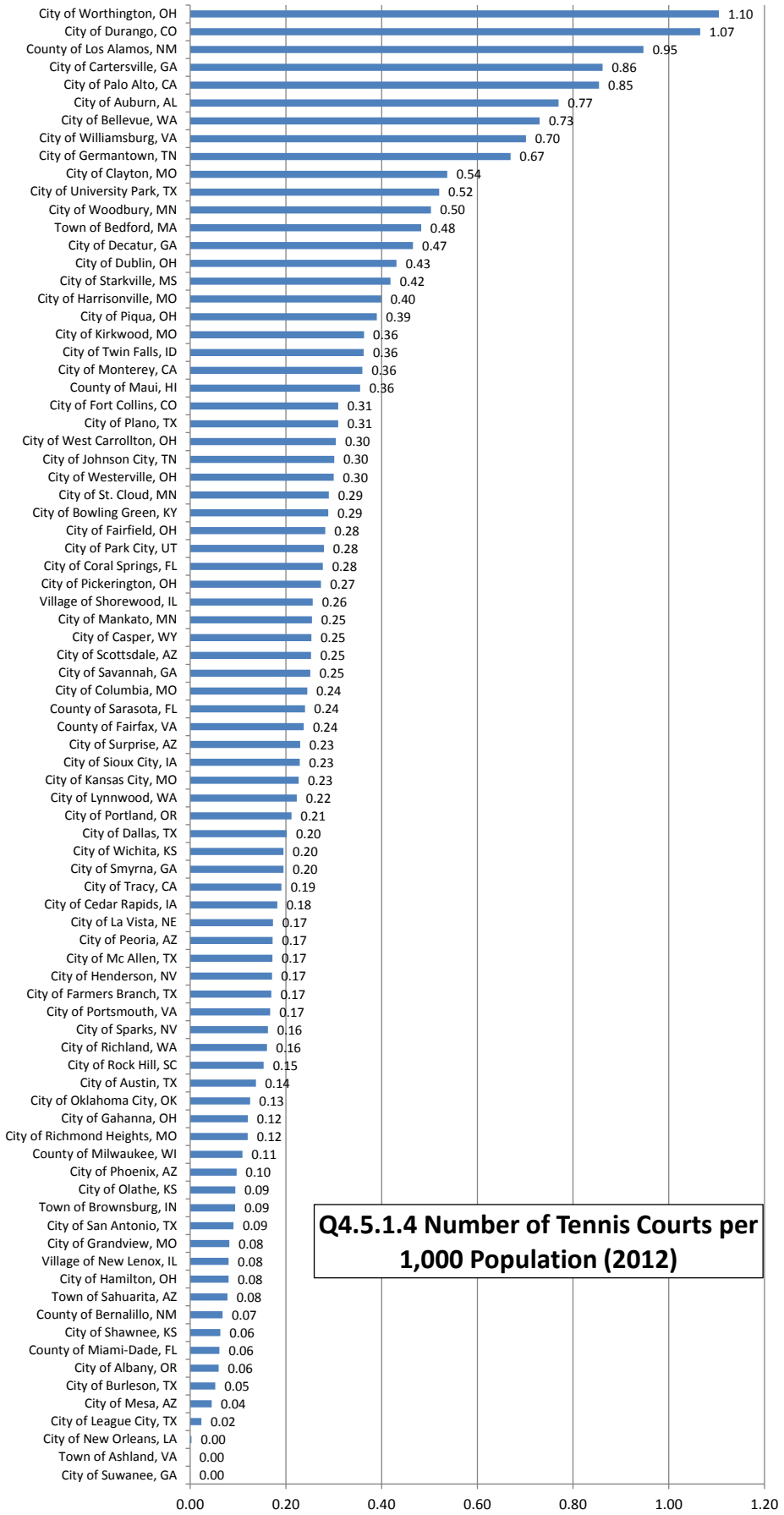
After a careful review, Commission Members determined that our existing parks provide ample park space per resident. The subsequent discussion focused on our existing parks and ensuring that they are well maintained and updated. The Commission also analyzed the feasibility of new features and upgrades.


City of Farmers Branch, TX 3.3
City of Grandview, MO 2.4
City of Monterey, CA 2.0
City of Piqua, OH 1.6
City of Worthington, OH 1.4
City of Dublin, OH 1.4
Village of New Lenox, IL 1.3
Town of Bedford, MA 1.2
County of Los Alamos, NM 1.2
City of Durango, CO 1.1
City of Williamsburg, VA 1.1
City of Tracy, CA 1.1
City of Columbia, MO 1.0
City of Park City, UT 1.0
City of Mc Allen, TX 1.0
City of St. Cloud, MN 1.0
City of West Carrollton, OH 1.0
City of Wichita, KS 0.9
Village of Shorewood, IL 0.9
City of La Vista, NE 0.9
City of Suwanee, GA 0.8
City of Germantown, TN 0.8
City of Lynnwood, WA 0.8
City of Woodbury, MN 0.7
County of Sarasota, FL 0.6
City of Richland, WA 0.6
City of Harrisonville, MO 0.6
City of Mankato, MN 0.5
City of Sparks, NV 0.5
City of Bellevue, WA 0.5
City of Savannah, GA 0.5
City of Sioux City, IA 0.5
City of Albany, OR 0.5
City of Gahanna, OH 0.5
City of Clayton, MO 0.4
City of Cedar Rapids, IA 0.4
City of Palo Alto, CA 0.4
Town of Ashland, VA 0.4
City of Westerville, OH 0.4
City of University Park, TX 0.4
City of Twin Falls, ID 0.4
City of Pickerington, OH 0.4
City of Bowling Green, KY 0.4
City of Hamilton, OH 0.4
City of Johnson City, TN 0.3
City of Burleson, TX 0.3
City of Starkville, MS 0.3
City of Fairfield, OH 0.3
City of Peoria, AZ 0.3
City of Decatur, GA 0.3
City of Cartersville, GA 0.3
City of Richmond Heights, MO 0.3
City of Kirkwood, MO 0.3
City of Coral Springs, FL 0.3
City of Fort Collins, CO 0.3
City of Auburn, AL 0.3
City of Smyrna, GA 0.3
City of Plano, TX 0.3
City of Shawnee, KS 0.3
City of Olathe, KS 0.2
City of Rock Hill, SC 0.2
City of Henderson, NV 0.2
City of Portland, OR 0.2
County of Bernalillo, NM 0.2
City of Kansas City, MO 0.2
City of Austin, TX 0.2
Town of Sahuarita, AZ 0.2
Town of Brownsburg, IN 0.2
County of Fairfax, VA 0.2
City of Oklahoma City, OK 0.2
City of Dallas, TX 0.2
City of Phoenix, AZ 0.2
County of Maui, HI 0.2
City of Scottsdale, AZ 0.2
City of Portsmouth, VA 0.1
City of Mesa, AZ 0.1
City of San Antonio, TX 0.1
County of Milwaukee, WI 0.1
City of League City, TX 0.1
City of Surprise, AZ 0.1
County of Miami-Dade, FL 0.1
Worthington
2012 Responses
High 3.3
Worthington 1.4
Median 0.4
Average 0.6
Low 0.1
Q4.5.1.3/Q2.2 Number of Playground Play Structures per 1,000 Population (2012)
0.0
0.5
1.0
1.5
2.0
2.5
3.0
3.5

8


City of Clayton, MO 8.0
City of Durango, CO 6.9
City of Harrisonville, MO 6.8
City of Worthington, OH 6.7
Village of New Lenox, IL 5.4
City of Park City, UT 4.2
City of Monterey, CA 4.0
City of Richmond Heights,... 3.6
Town of Bedford, MA 3.5
City of Palo Alto, CA 3.5
City of Westerville, OH 3.1
City of Farmers Branch, TX 2.8
City of Kirkwood, MO 2.8
City of Dublin, OH 2.7
City of Piqua, OH 2.6
City of La Vista, NE 2.6
City of Williamsburg, VA 2.5
City of Grandview, MO 2.5
City of Starkville, MS 2.3
City of Cartersville, GA 2.2
City of Burleson, TX 2.0
City of Fort Collins, CO 1.6
City of Johnson City, TN 1.6
City of Auburn, AL 1.6
City of Smyrna, GA 1.5
City of Bowling Green, KY 1.5
City of Lynnwood, WA 1.4
City of Portsmouth, VA 1.3
City of Savannah, GA 1.1
City of Sparks, NV 1.1
City of Henderson, NV 1.1
City of Plano, TX 1.1
County of Bernalillo, NM 1.1
City of Casper, WY 1.0
City of Bellevue, WA 1.0
City of Portland, OR 0.9
City of Fairfield, OH 0.9
City of Columbia, MO 0.9
County of Maui, HI 0.8
City of Rock Hill, SC 0.8
City of Mankato, MN 0.7
City of St. Cloud, MN 0.6
City of Mc Allen, TX 0.6
City of Dallas, TX 0.6
City of Scottsdale, AZ 0.5
City of Kansas City, MO 0.5
City of Sioux City, IA 0.5
County of Fairfax, VA 0.5
City of Coral Springs, FL 0.5
County of Sarasota, FL 0.5
City of Peoria, AZ 0.5
City of Richland, WA 0.4
City of Shawnee, KS 0.4
City of Surprise, AZ 0.4
City of Twin Falls, ID 0.3
City of Hamilton, OH 0.3
City of Aurora, CO 0.3
City of Phoenix, AZ 0.3
City of Mesa, AZ 0.3
City of Oklahoma City, OK 0.3
City of Tracy, CA 0.3
City of San Antonio, TX 0.3
City of League City, TX 0.3
City of Wichita, KS 0.3
City of Albany, OR 0.2
City of West Carrollton, OH 0.2
Town of Sahuarita, AZ 0.2
City of Germantown, TN 0.2
County of Milwaukee, WI 0.2
City of Gahanna, OH 0.2
City of Cedar Rapids, IA 0.1
County of Miami-Dade, FL 0.1
Town of Ashland, VA 0.0
City of Pickerington, OH 0.0
County of Los Alamos, NM 0.0
Village of Shorewood, IL 0.0
City of Suwanee, GA 0.0
City of University Park, TX 0.0
City of Woodbury, MN 0.0
City of Olathe, KS 0.0
Worthington
2012 Responses
High 8.0
Worthington 6.7
Median 0.8
Average 1.4
Low 0.0
Q4.2.1.2 Total Square Feet of Recreation/ Community Centers per Resident (2012)
0.0 1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0 5.0 6.0 7.0 8.0 9.0

5


City of Worthington, OH 1.10
City of Durango, CO 1.07
County of Los Alamos, NM 0.95
City of Cartersville, GA 0.86
City of Palo Alto, CA 0.85
City of Auburn, AL 0.77
City of Bellevue, WA 0.73
City of Williamsburg, VA 0.70
City of Germantown, TN 0.67
City of Clayton, MO 0.54
City of University Park, TX 0.52
City of Woodbury, MN 0.50
Town of Bedford, MA 0.48
City of Decatur, GA 0.47
City of Dublin, OH 0.43
City of Starkville, MS 0.42
City of Harrisonville, MO 0.40
City of Piqua, OH 0.39
City of Kirkwood, MO 0.36
City of Twin Falls, ID 0.36
City of Monterey, CA 0.36
County of Maui, HI 0.36
City of Fort Collins, CO 0.31
City of Plano, TX 0.31
City of West Carrollton, OH 0.30
City of Johnson City, TN 0.30
City of Westerville, OH 0.30
City of St. Cloud, MN 0.29
City of Bowling Green, KY 0.29
City of Fairfield, OH 0.28
City of Park City, UT 0.28
City of Coral Springs, FL 0.28
City of Pickerington, OH 0.27
Village of Shorewood, IL 0.26
City of Mankato, MN 0.25
City of Casper, WY 0.25
City of Scottsdale, AZ 0.25
City of Savannah, GA 0.25
City of Columbia, MO 0.24
County of Sarasota, FL 0.24
County of Fairfax, VA 0.24
City of Surprise, AZ 0.23
City of Sioux City, IA 0.23
City of Kansas City, MO 0.23
City of Lynnwood, WA 0.22
City of Portland, OR 0.21
City of Dallas, TX 0.20
City of Wichita, KS 0.20
City of Smyrna, GA 0.20
City of Tracy, CA 0.19
City of Cedar Rapids, IA 0.18
City of La Vista, NE 0.17
City of Peoria, AZ 0.17
City of Mc Allen, TX 0.17
City of Henderson, NV 0.17
City of Farmers Branch, TX 0.17
City of Portsmouth, VA 0.17
City of Sparks, NV 0.16
City of Richland, WA 0.16
City of Rock Hill, SC 0.15
City of Austin, TX 0.14
City of Oklahoma City, OK 0.13
City of Gahanna, OH 0.12
City of Richmond Heights, MO 0.12
County of Milwaukee, WI 0.11
City of Phoenix, AZ 0.10
City of Olathe, KS 0.09
Town of Brownsburg, IN 0.09
City of San Antonio, TX 0.09
City of Grandview, MO 0.08
Village of New Lenox, IL 0.08
City of Hamilton, OH 0.08
Town of Sahuarita, AZ 0.08
County of Bernalillo, NM 0.07
City of Shawnee, KS 0.06
County of Miami-Dade, FL 0.06
City of Albany, OR 0.06
City of Burleson, TX 0.05
City of Mesa, AZ 0.04
City of League City, TX 0.02
City of New Orleans, LA 0.00
Town of Ashland, VA 0.00
City of Suwanee, GA 0.00
0.00
0.20
0.40
0.60
0.80
1.00
1.20
Q4.5.1.4 Number of Tennis Courts per 1,000 Population (2012)

Park Trends

Parks and Recreation staff members put together a presentation for members with a look at popular park trends from around the country. Some information from the presentation is included as a reference.

The primary source was: http://www.playgroundprofessionals.com/news/parks-and-recreation/look-trends-parks-recreation106.

THE MOST COMMONLY PLANNED ADDITIONS:

- Dog parks (planned by 26.7 percent of parks respondents who will be adding features)
- Splash play areas (26.2 percent)
- Trails (24.4 percent)
- Park structures such as shelters and restroom buildings (21.6 percent)
- Playgrounds (20.3 percent)
- Skate parks (17.5 percent)
- Synthetic turf sports fields (17.2 percent)
- Disc golf courses (16.7 percent)
- Open spaces such as fields, gardens and undeveloped areas (16.5 percent)
- Bleachers and seating (12.1 percent)

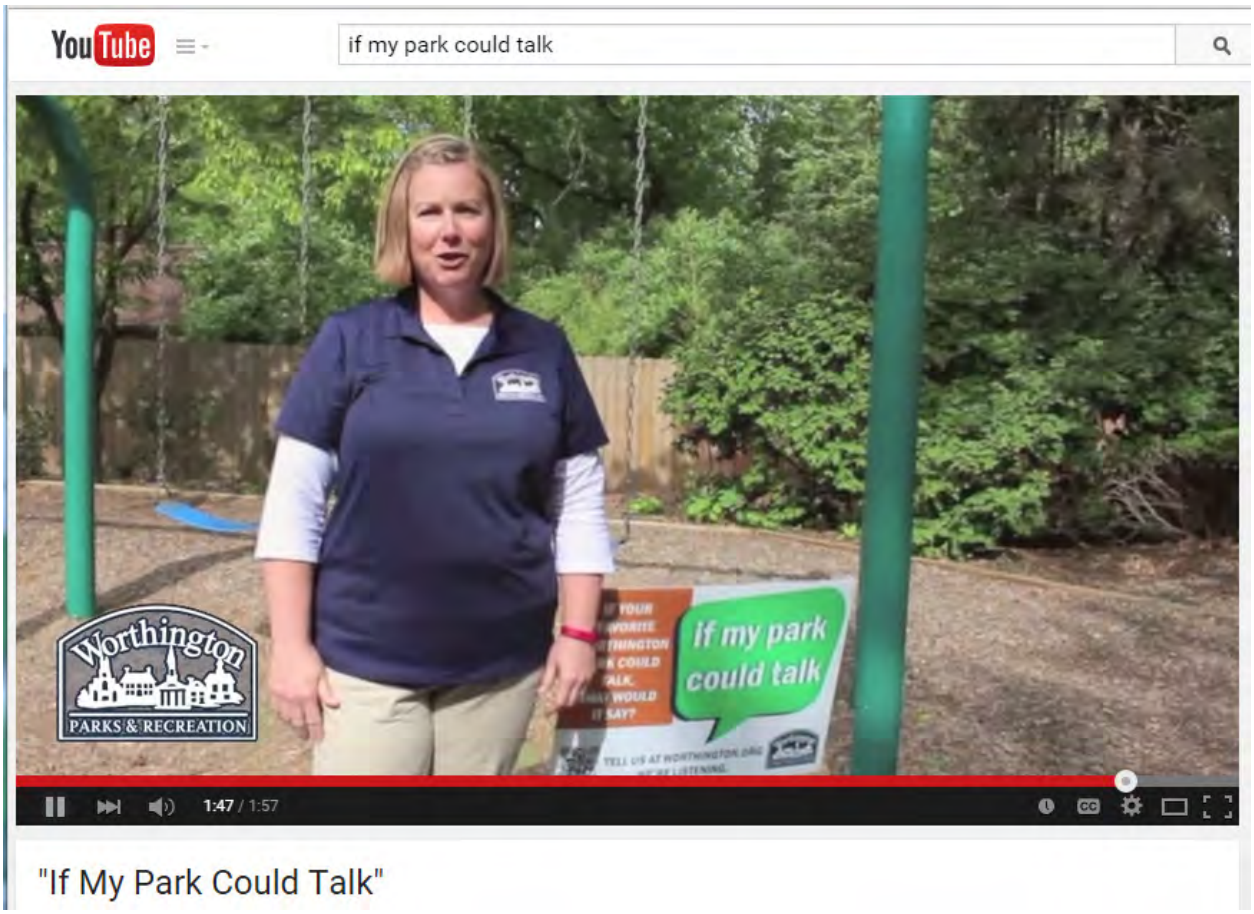
OTHER MORE CUTTING EDGE OR TRENDY IDEAS:

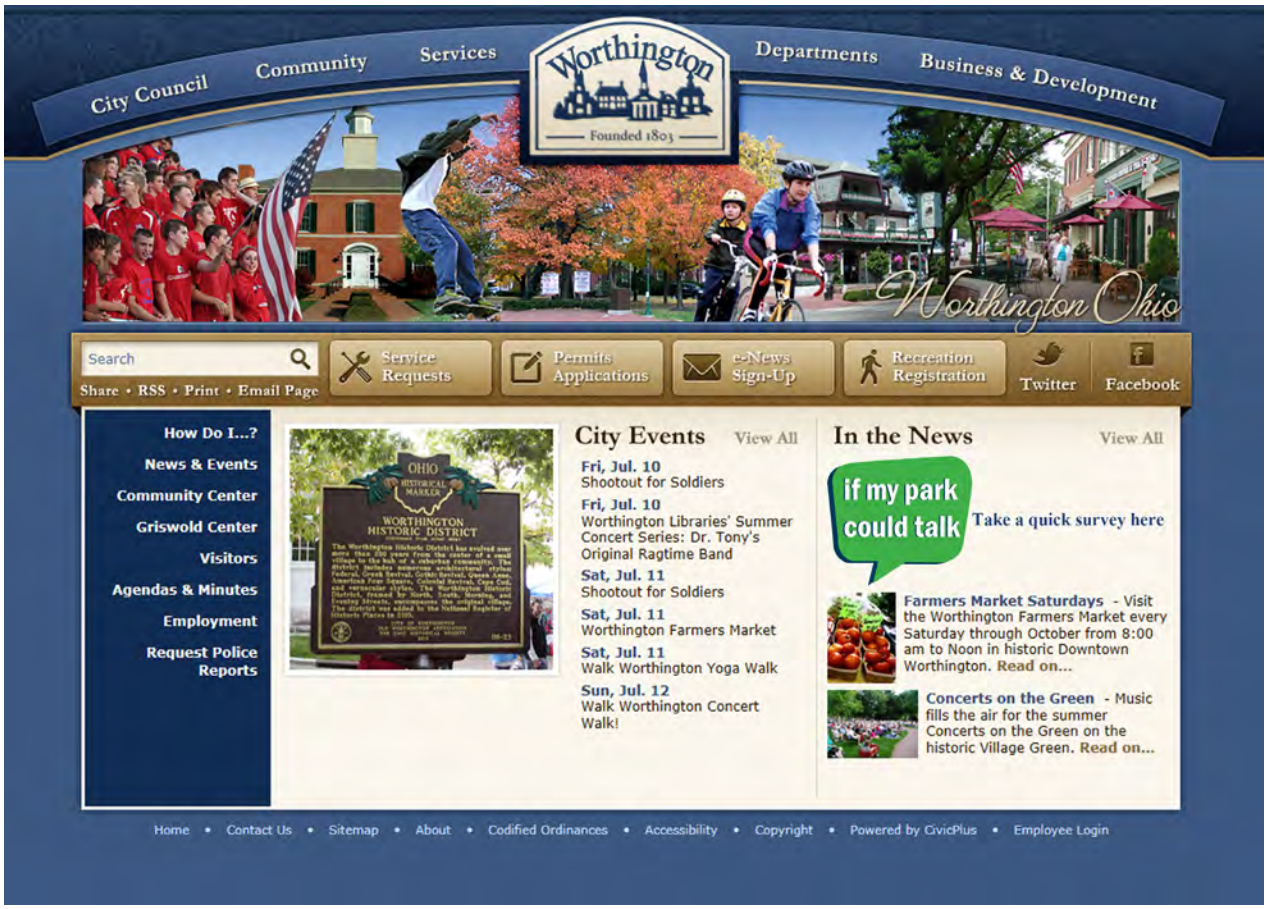
- Natural (Unstructured) Play
- Partnerships
- Engagement
- Electronics
- QR codes
- Virtual Tours
- Coupon Programs
- Geocache
- CrossFit/Adventure Racing

In May of 2015 the Worthington Parks and Recreation Department developed a Parks Vision Survey that was available online through the host site Survey Monkey. Links were available on the City of Worthington website and marketing was accomplished through social media, fliers and yard signs. Two hundred and seventy three responses were collected and the data was used by the Parks Commission to determine park utilization, amenities, resources and desired improvements.

"If My Park Could Talk" Media Strategy and Survey Results

50 yard signs prominent at every Worthington Park with QR code links to survey


YouTube
if my park could talk
Worthington
PARKS & RECREATION
if my park could talk
1:47 / 1:57
"If My Park Could Talk"


City Council
Community
Services
Worthington
Founded 1803
Departments
Business & Development
Worthington Ohio
Search
Share • RSS • Print • Email Page
Service Requests
Permits Applications
e-News Sign-Up
Recreation Registration
Twitter
Facebook
How Do I...?
News & Events
Community Center
Griswold Center
Visitors
Agendas & Minutes
Employment
Request Police Reports
City Events
View All
Fri, Jul. 10
Shootout for Soldiers
Fri, Jul. 10
Worthington Libraries' Summer Concert Series: Dr. Tony's Original Ragtime Band
Sat, Jul. 11
Shootout for Soldiers
Sat, Jul. 11
Worthington Farmers Market
Sat, Jul. 11
Walk Worthington Yoga Walk
Sun, Jul. 12
Walk Worthington Concert Walk!
In the News
View All
if my park could talk
Take a quick survey here
Farmers Market Saturdays - Visit the Worthington Farmers Market every Saturday through October from 8:00 am to Noon in historic Downtown Worthington. Read on...
Concerts on the Green - Music fills the air for the summer Concerts on the Green on the historic Village Green. Read on...
Home • Contact Us • Sitemap • About • Codified Ordinances • Accessibility • Copyright • Powered by CivicPlus • Employee Login

Survey questions and results are summarized below:

1. The Worthington Parks and Recreation Department maintains 16 parks throughout the City. Please indicate the parks you currently utilize.

- Survey results indicated all sixteen parks were represented by survey participants. The top three parks utilized were Olentangy River Parklands, the Village Green and Selby Park.

2. Regarding the parks you visit, please rate the importance of the following amenities with 1 being low importance up to 5 being high importance.

- Survey results denote bike and recreational paths, nature areas and drinking fountains rated the highest importance (42%-56% rating of 5) while basketball courts, tennis courts rated the lowest importance (41%-40% rating of 1).

3. If resources were available to add new amenities to our parks, please rank the following items in order of importance to you and your family with 1 being low importance up to 5 being high importance.

- Natural play areas, winter amenities and enhancing/creating river access scored highest in importance, averaging 35.34%. Adventure recreation, synthetic turf fields and disc golf received the lowest importance rating with and average rating of 5.21%

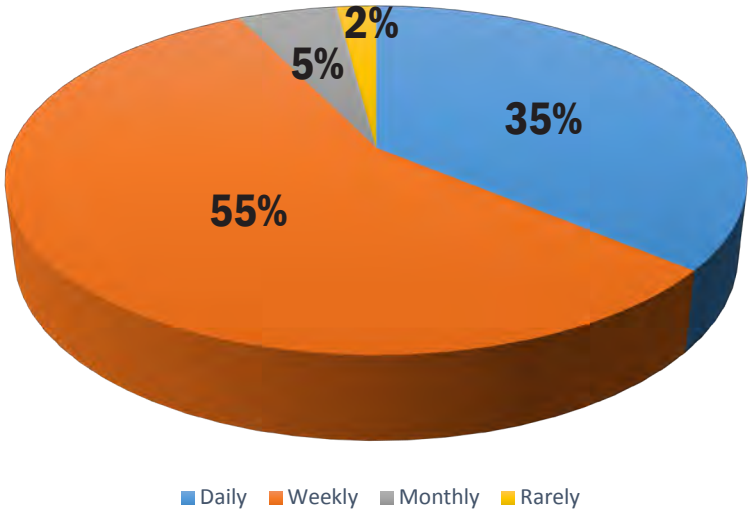
4. If you would like to see new amenities in a specific park, please indicate below.

- **Comments included:**
  a. Restrooms (20 comments)
  b. Drinking fountains (7 comments)
  c. Shelters/benches (7 comments)
  d. Connectivity via trials/bike paths/river access (6 comments)

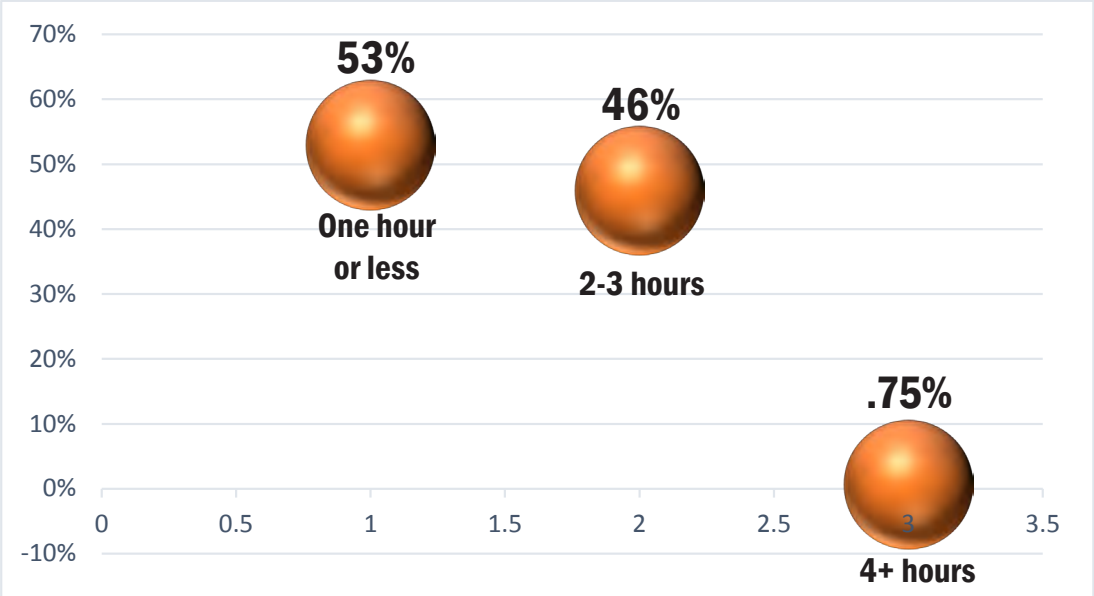
5. Please indicate your opinion on the quantity of amenities on our parks (too many, just right, not enough).

- Athletic Fields – 76% just right
- Basketball Courts – 86% just right
- Biking Trails – 49% not enough
- Green/Open Spaces – 66% just right
- Shelter Space – 56% just right
- Playgrounds – 82% just right
- Tennis Courts – 83% just right
- Walking Trails – 59% not enough

6. How often do you use the parks?



7. How long do you typically spend at the park?



8. What is your primary motivation for visiting the parks?

The top two responses:

exercise and fitness

nature/being outdoors

9. Which of the following best describes your attitude about the parks amenities (quantity and condition)?

- Current amenities only need updated/renovated scored the highest with a 46% response rate.

10. Please check your top three preferred park improvements.

- Add improve restroom facilities – 62%
- Improve trails – 51%
- Plant trees – 39%

11. The Parks Department maintains 14 playgrounds. Please indicate which playgrounds you and your family utilize.

- All 14 playgrounds were utilized by responders. Selby playground and All Children's playground were utilized the most, while Heischman Park and Shaker Square Park were utilized the least.

12. In regards to questions 12, how would you rate the condition of the playground(s)?

- 52% of survey responders rated the condition of the playground(s) as satisfactory. 33% rated them as excellent.

13. How do you and your family travel to our parks?

76% walk

53% drive

43% drive

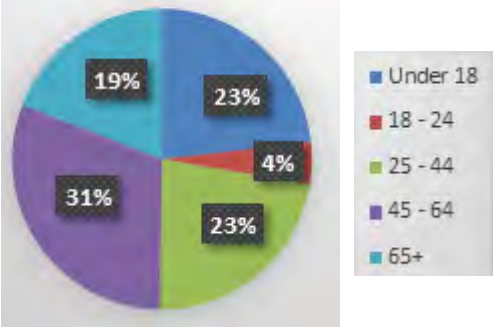
Statistical Information:

Average age: ages 25-39 and 40 – 54 represented 71% of survey respondents.
How many people live in your household – average of 4 people.
Gender – Female 59%, Male 40%.
Residency status: Resident (89%), Working Resident (3%), Non-Resident (7%).

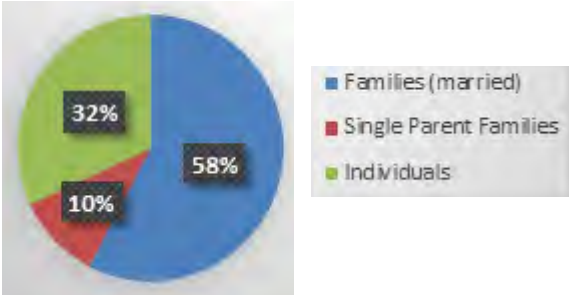
Demographics

According to census records the population of Worthington has slowly but steadily declined from the 1970's to 2010 by almost 2000 people. Additionally the city has seen a decrease in family households and in the percentage of children living in Worthington. Single households and non-married family households have increased by 3% each and the number of seniors (age 65+) living alone also increased by 1.5% between 2000 and 2010. The median age in the city was 44.9 years old in 2010 and adults made up 77% of the population. The racial makeup of the city is 93% white, 2.2% African American, 2.3% Asian, and 1.7% Hispanic/Latino, with a slight decrease in the white population and increases in African American and Hispanic/Latino populations. The gender makeup of the city is 47.2% male and 52.8% female.

Age Demographics



Household Demographics



Since 77% of the Worthington population is currently over the age of 18, there is some merit to adding or finding space in the parks for adult pursuits (pickleball courts, passive recreation spaces, community gardens, outdoor fitness trails). However, there are several factors which point to another increase in the youth population since the date of the last census. According to Worthington Schools, enrollment in elementary schools has increased by over 400 students in the last 5 years, with City schools among the most crowded. City of Worthington birth rates and multi-family home building permits also increased in the last 5 years. As neighborhood populations age, those homes may turn over to young families again.

ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

The following tables illustrate projected enrollments by grade and by grade group through the 2025-26 school year. Enrollment is projected to increase by 624 students or approximately 6 percent.

Please note that the Pre-K projections are for special needs students only. Also the career technical students are included in the 11th and 12th grade projections for the high schools. They are not broken out separately. Ungraded students are not included in the by school projections.

Worthington City School District
Projected Enrollment

Grade	2015-16 Actual	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Pre-K (special needs)	106	125	129	136	132	130	130	130	130	130	130
K	733	729	753	795	774	757	757	757	757	757	757
1	774	763	758	783	827	805	788	788	788	788	788
2	818	782	770	765	791	835	813	795	795	795	795
3	829	820	783	771	766	792	836	814	796	796	796
4	761	819	815	778	767	761	787	831	809	792	792
5	698	761	818	814	777	766	761	780	830	808	791
6	729	700	762	820	816	779	768	762	788	832	810
7	719	715	705	768	826	822	785	773	768	794	838
8	711	721	736	706	769	827	823	786	775	769	795
9	762	725	735	750	720	784	843	839	801	789	784
10	735	755	718	728	743	713	777	835	831	794	782
11	632	611	628	597	605	618	593	646	694	691	660
12	613	616	605	621	591	599	611	587	639	687	684
Pre-K - 12 Total	9,634	9,672	9,716	9,832	9,904	9,988	10,072	10,129	10,201	10,222	10,202
Ungraded	25	17	17	17	17	17	17	18	18	18	18
Career Tech Comprehensive - Low Bay	98	128	128	126	124	126	125	128	138	143	139
Career Tech Off-Site	50	66	66	65	64	65	64	66	71	72	72
Grand Total	9,807	9,883	9,927	10,040	10,109	10,196	10,278	10,341	10,428	10,456	10,431

Source: FutureThink

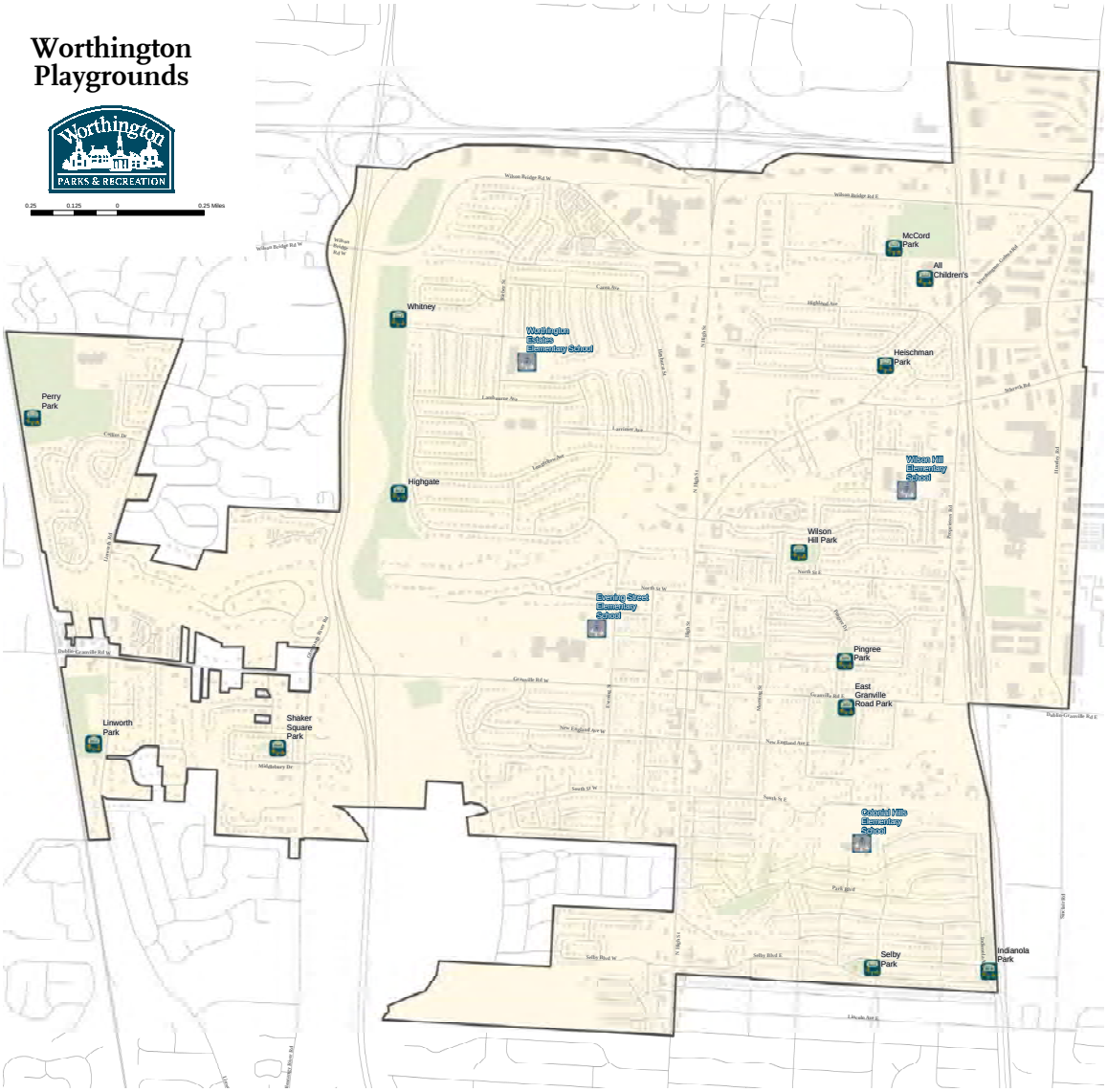
Worthington City School District
Projected Enrollment by Grade Group

Grade	2015-16 Actual	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Pre-K (special needs)	106	125	129	136	132	130	130	130	130	130	130
K - 6	5,336	5,374	5,460	5,526	5,518	5,495	5,510	5,539	5,563	5,568	5,529
7 - 8	1,430	1,436	1,441	1,474	1,595	1,649	1,608	1,559	1,543	1,563	1,633
9 - 12	2,762	2,717	2,686	2,696	2,659	2,714	2,824	2,907	2,965	2,961	2,910
Pre-K - 12 Total	9,634	9,672	9,716	9,832	9,904	9,988	10,072	10,129	10,201	10,222	10,202
Ungraded	25	17	17	17	17	17	17	18	18	18	18
Career Tech Comprehensive - Low Bay	98	128	128	126	124	126	125	128	138	143	139
Career Tech Off-Site	50	66	66	65	64	65	64	66	71	72	72
Grand Total	9,807	9,883	9,927	10,040	10,109	10,196	10,278	10,341	10,428	10,456	10,431

Source: FutureThink

Playground Challenges

Worthington Parks and Recreation currently has 14 playgrounds constructed between 1992 and 2016. The average replacement cost of each of those playgrounds, including the safety surfacing, is $150,000.



If the city replaced a playground every other year, it would take 28 years to cycle through the entire inventory of playgrounds at an annual cost of $75,000 per year, not including inflation. Currently, three existing playgrounds are over 20 years old. Over the past 10 years (2003-2013), the Parks Division received an average of $89,570 per year in capital improvement funds from the City of Worthington's annual budgeting process. These funds were not just for playgrounds, but for all park improvements. As you can see, if that average allocation stays similar over the next 10 years, only about $15,000 per year would be available for all other park improvements ($90,000 less the $75,000 needed to update playgrounds).

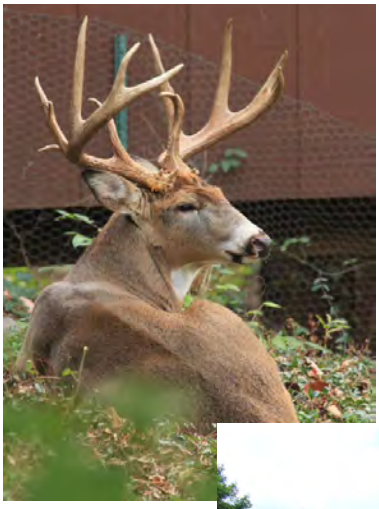
Playground Challenges continued

After reviewing this overview of playgrounds and their funding, members agreed that keeping our playgrounds at the desired standard as currently structured would be problematic if it effectively eliminates opportunities for other park improvements. As a result, opportunities will be sought to look at alternatives to our existing modular playgrounds such as natural playgrounds, reduced footprint playgrounds in locations where other playgrounds are available within walking distance for residents, or alternatively funded playgrounds to reduce the burden on the city's capital funds. One example of that type of opportunity would be Indianola Park. The next time it is up for renovation the playground could be eliminated due to its proximity to Selby Park, in order to make resources available at other parks.

Park Maintenance Challenges

The Parks Manager worked with parks staff members to compile a list of maintenance challenges in our current parks. These issues were presented to Commission Members during their February 2015 meeting. The presentation included a park by park listing of maintenance items which present challenges regarding staff time, financial resources, or capital investment challenges. Here are the overall themes from the presentation:

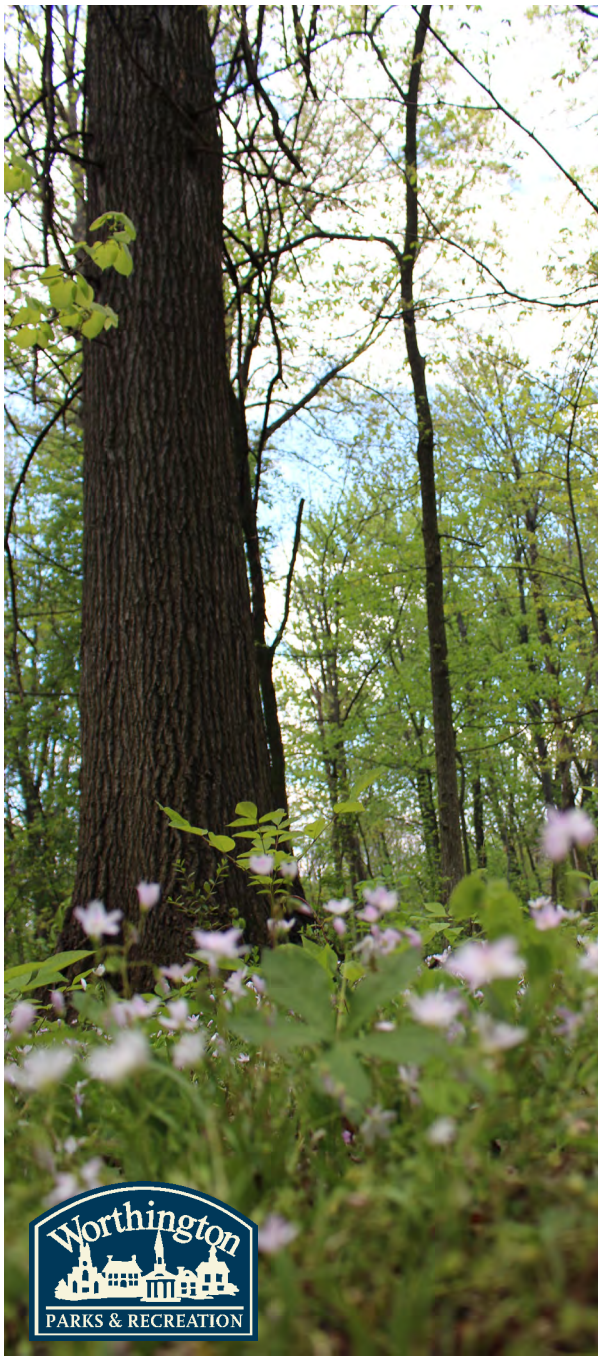
1. **Structure/Infrastructure**
   - Lack of or Failing Irrigation/Drainage
   - Branding and Related Upkeep of Existing 28 Park Entrance Signs
   - Fencing Replacement/Repair
   - Parking Lot/Pavement Issues
   - Bleacher Pads/Overall Surfacing Challenges
2. **Amenities**
   - Play Structure Repair and Replacement Schedule
   - Aging Buildings
3. **Flora/Fauna**
   - Invasive Species Control
   - Ash Tree Removal
   - Whitetail Deer
4. **Equipment**
5. **Outdated/Under-Purpose Items**



PLANNING THE FUTURE OF OUR PARKS

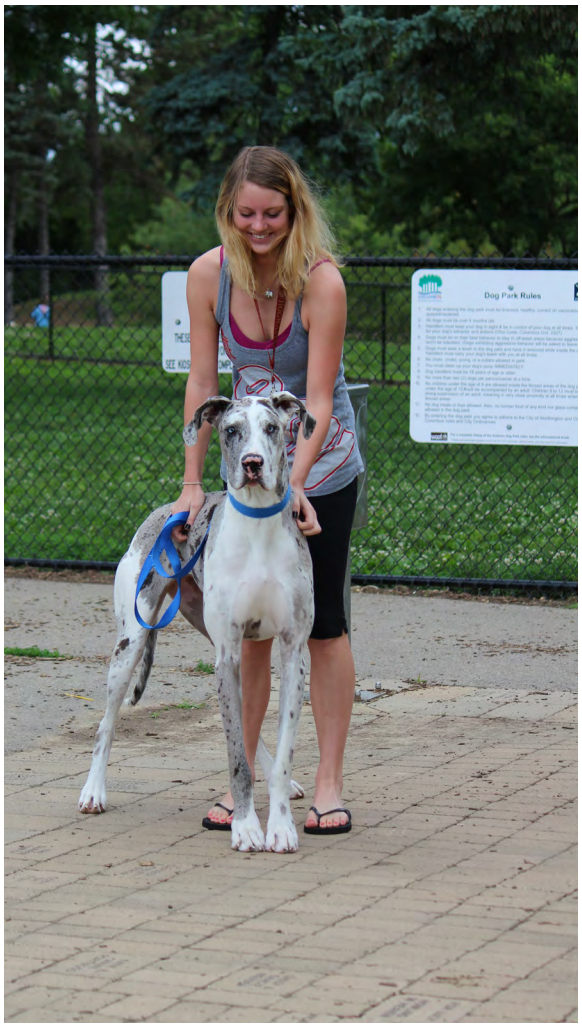
Parks Manager Scott Brown shares ideas with residents during one of the Parks Planning Open House sessions at the Worthington Community Center.

East Granville Road Park



- Replace the existing playground with a nature oriented play area or natural playground
- Establish a native plant/pollinator garden or cut back on mowing to just usage areas in park
- Evaluate trails throughout Moses Wright for improvement
- Add trees along park frontage on 161
- Replace stone parking lot with pervious pavement and re-landscape the island
- Push sidewalk back off the road and reconfigure the 161 edge of the park

Godown Park



- Add parking
- Address ditch that makes mowing and maintenance difficult.
- Move the port-o-john to where it is screened but still accessible for maintenance
- Look for ways to improve drainage and continue reviewing turf improvement options

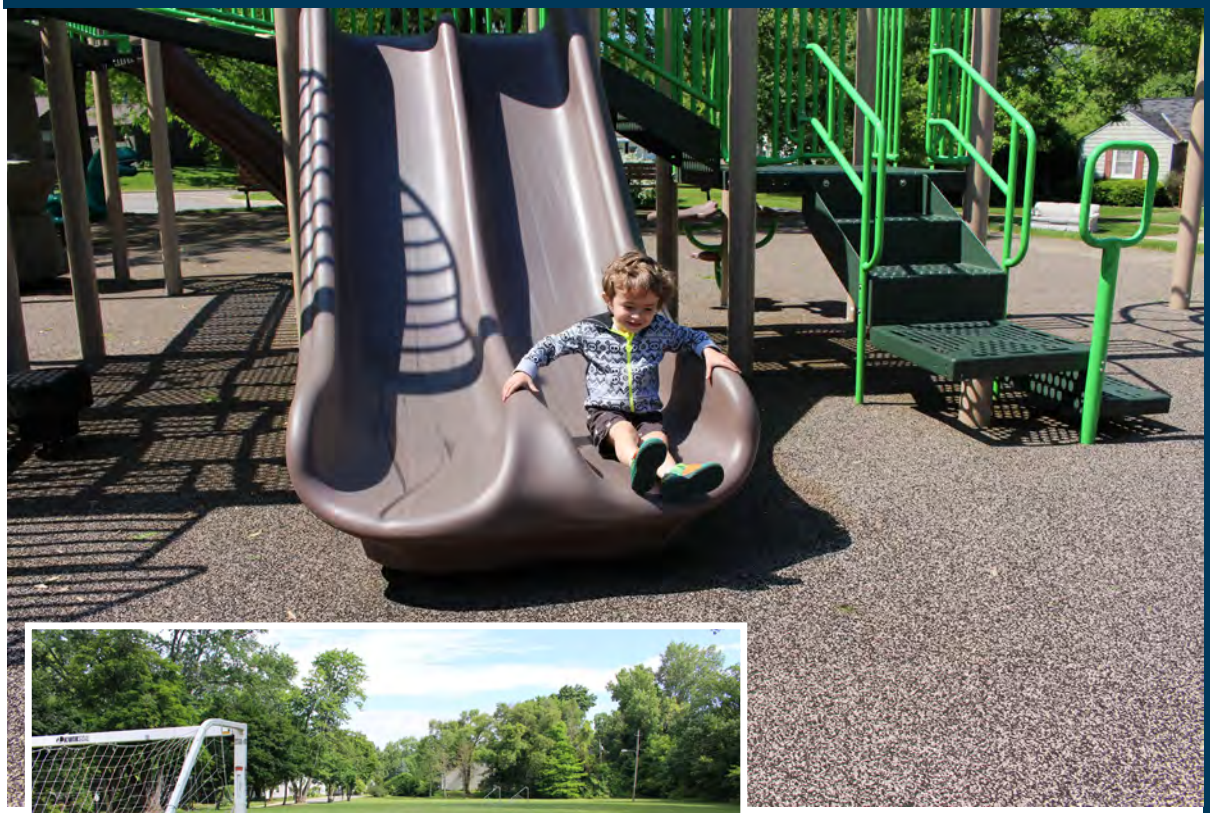
Heischman Park

- Perform paved path improvements along the side of the park and along Worthington-Galena Road
- Establish a little library site or reading circle plaza

Huntley Bowl Park

- Reimagine park's use to possibly include a sledding hill, ice rink, cross fit, archery, obstacle course, etc.
- Formalize, improve, or do away with walking "path"
- Evaluate lighting for security
- Improve parking and access
- Remove failing wall structure - let it return to grass or usable space
- Improve turf for continued alternative field usage/rentals

Indianola Park



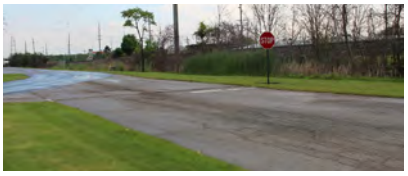
- Evaluate and repair drainage problems in northeast corner of the green space

Linworth Park

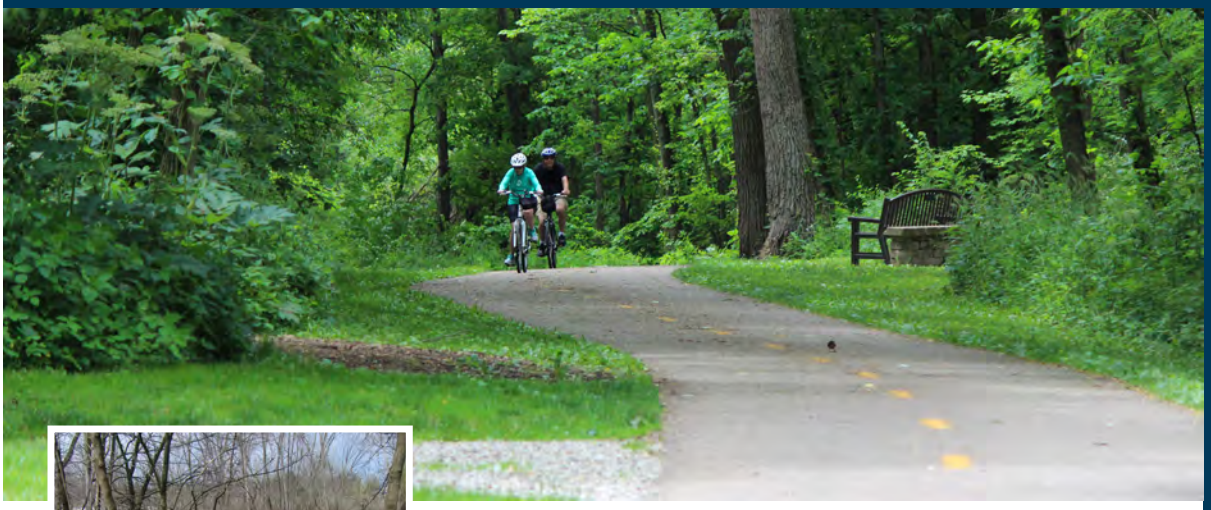
- Add to existing path to make circular route around park
- Add more trees to the area south of the playground
- Look for opportunities to square off park through acquisition of property
- Assess ball diamond usage to determine whether to renovate field and backstop or remove ball diamond and create space for field

McCord Park

- Redesign and renovate the entire park using professional consultants
- Replace playground
- Add circular walking path around park, with a connector from the west to the Community Center
- Add picnic tables and shade structures or trees
- Replace aging rest rooms - consider multi-purpose facility with storage, press box
- Redesign sports field for better layout
- Improve park boundary along railroad tracks to make more presentable
- Add way-finding signage to entire McCord complex
- Consider the possibility of synthetic infields (similar to Berliner Park)
- Redesign entrance to improve access and fix dated COTA configuration
- Add half court basketball adjacent to the playground
- Improve drainage throughout the park
- Consider adding a train observation and play area for children

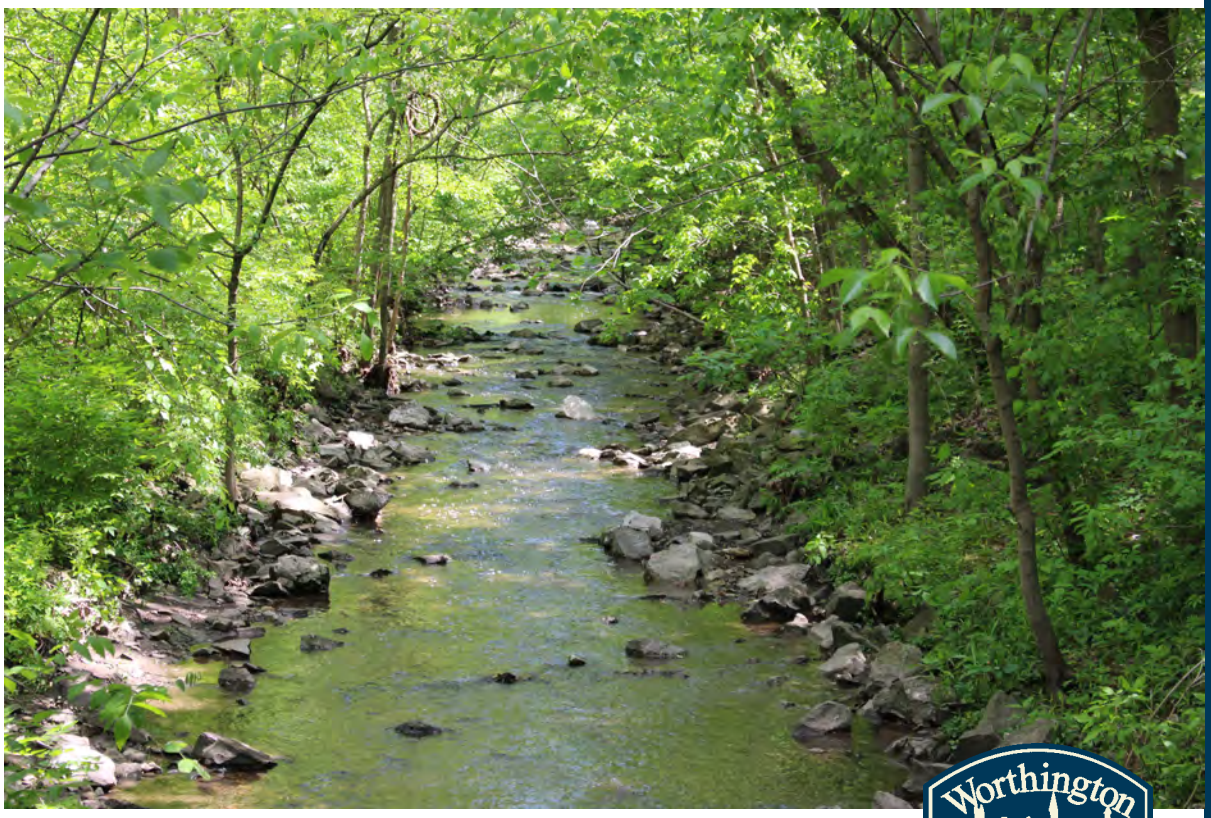


Olentangy Parklands



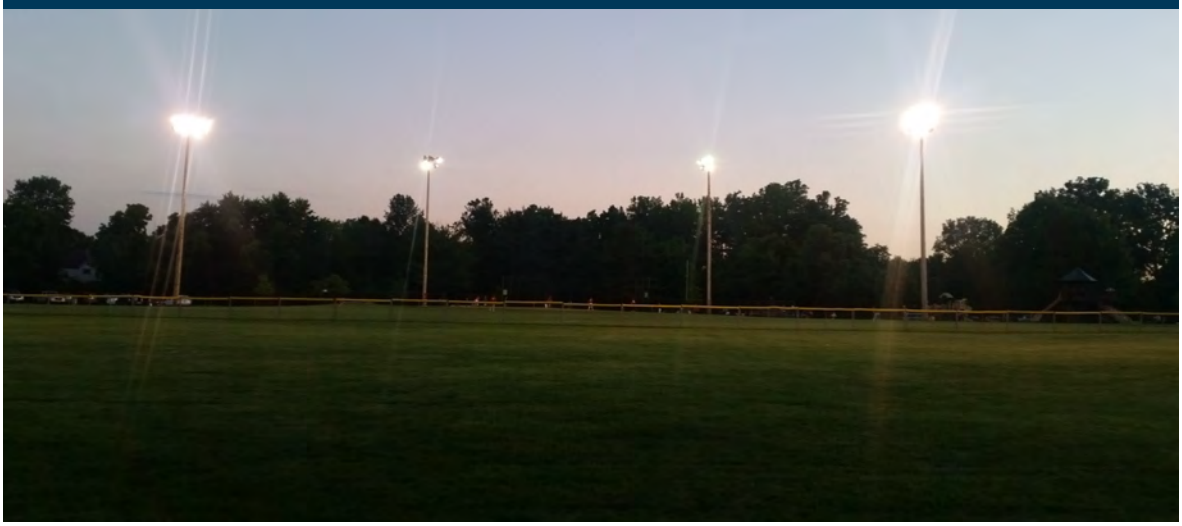
- Improve river access and utilization
- Add restroom to area around tennis courts (consider composting rest rooms like Metroparks)
- Improve sledding hill/formalize
- Repave the parking lot
- Add way-finding signage at key points in the park and along the Olentangy Trail including safety signage along the trail
- Formalize the entrance to the Olentangy Parklands coming off of Wilson Bridge Road
- Improve the aesthetics of the area surrounding the lower parking lot and the trail coming off the lot
- Assess the Olentangy Trail for enhancements to deal with congestion and user conflict such as separate walking and biking paths, add'l chip trails, etc.
- Improve the bridges along the Olentangy Trail

Park Boulevard Park



- Add benches or picnic tables for passive use

Perry Park



- Continue ball diamond renovations
- Repave the asphalt path around fields and between parks
- Add trees to provide shade for spectators
- Renovate rest rooms and water fountains including bottle fillers
- Improve connectivity to Snouffer by adding a bridge or culvert over Linworth Run
- Move tot lot from current location and ultimately combine with larger playground when renovation is due
- Repair electrical issues with field lighting to improve performance of lights
- Evaluate slope/grade issue on Perry 1 soccer field to determine feasability of reducing slope for better soccer playability

Pingree Park

- Resurface the basketball court
- Replace the water fountain

Selby Park

- Redesign west end of park utilizing consultant services
- Renovate the existing Selby shelter house for ADA compliance and better use of space
- Include in renovation of shelter house access to rest rooms from outside
- Redesign parking lot/asphalt area including the separation of the basketball court
- Replace drinking fountains to resolve on-going issues
- Add trees to the east end of park around playground

Shaker Square Park

- **Replace the playground**

Snouffer Park

- Evaluate the need for a permanent fence for either field
- Create nicer pad for port-o-johns and hide them with fence or landscaping
- Repair or replace drinking fountain
- Evaluate and recommend a solution for the mounds around diamonds 1 and 2
- Evaluate the addition of a science lab or play structure along the creek

Village Green

- Work closely with old school administration site to ensure use is compatible with park space
- Evaluate the overall usage of space relating to benches, stage area, electric, and drinking fountains

General/Non-Park Specific Recommendations

- Find a location to establish or construct dedicated pickle ball courts.
- Update Park entrance signs for consistent branding and lower maintenance signage
- Upgrade drinking fountains city-wide with priority on community parks.
- Update electrical systems at all tennis courts - timers, etc.
- Add a second community garden
- Update/replace aging park benches and picnic tables
- Add a three season shelter somewhere in our park system
- Create swales and rain gardens to model better methods of storm water management
- Evaluate security lighting throughout the entire park system.
- Make aesthetic and functional improvements to the north end of the parks maintenance facility at McCord Park.
- Consider the addition of a fitness trail at either McCord Park or along the Olentangy Multi-Use Trail.

Most Critical Park Improvements

The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the overall list of park improvements. The information provided to them during the process including the public feedback they received and they selected the following projects as the most critical moving forward:

- Update park entrance signs for consistent branding and lower maintenance signage.

- Add parking at Godown Park.
- Find a location to establish or construct dedicated pickle ball courts.
- Redesign and renovate the entire McCord Park using a professional consultant.
- Improve river access at the Olentangy Parklands.

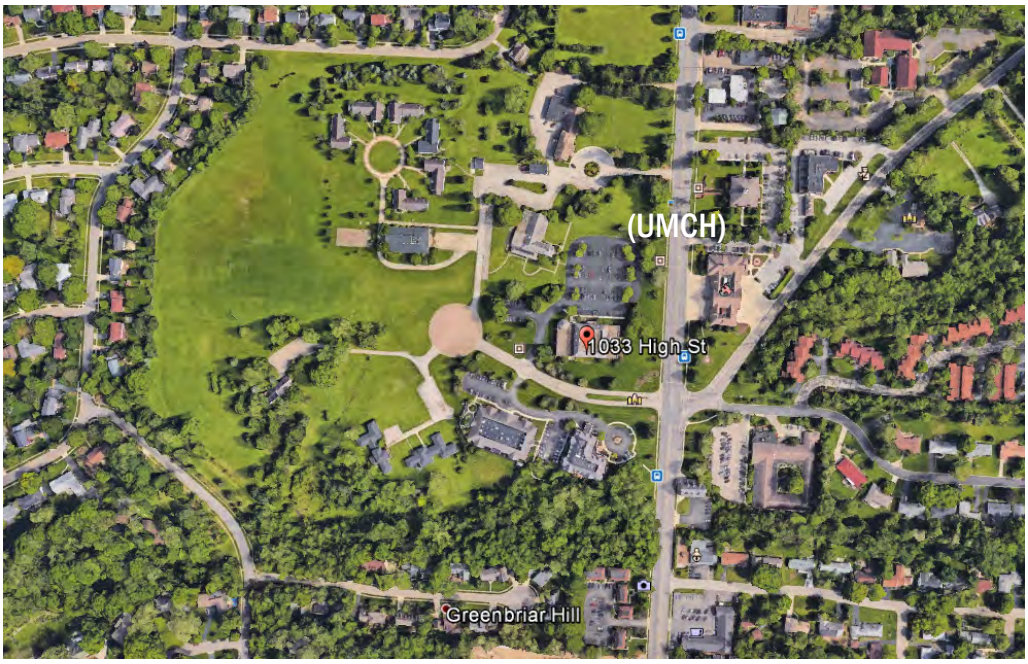
- Add restrooms to the area around the tennis courts/trailhead at the Olentangy Parklands consider composting restrooms like Metroparks.
- Improve/formalize the sledding hill at the Olentangy Parklands.
- Continue the ball diamond renovations at Perry Park (scheduled for 2015-2017.)
- Redesign the west end of Selby Park utilizing consultant services.
- Deal with the frontage ditch at Godown Park that makes mowing and maintenance difficult.
- Replace the playgrounds at East Granville Road Park with a nature oriented playground and replace the playground at Shaker Square Park.

Future Park Planning

Worthington benchmarks well above average in park measurements like park acreage per 1,000 population. In a 2012 analysis, Worthington had 12.4 acres per 1,000 population and the average amongst communities polled was 11.2 with the median being 7.8. This is true of most other park benchmarks including playgrounds, tennis courts, athletic fields, and basketball courts. Worthington is right at the average for bike, walking and hiking trails.

With that in mind, the focus of this planning process has been on improving and maintaining the park spaces we currently have. However, as opportunities arise for additional park acquisition, the following opportunities are most desirable:

A. The addition of park space as a part of the United Methodist Children's Home (UMCH) redevelopment. One of the most desired additions to our park inventory would be natural spaces for passive recreation and the area along Tucker Run would provide an appealing opportunity for nature trails, education and interpretation opportunities, and a natural playground. There may also be an opportunity for a centrally located three season shelter which is one of the most desirable amenities to be added to our system. Finally, the addition of a circular multi-use path around the perimeter of the development would be a great opportunity for expanding our bike and pedestrian footprint in the city.



B. Another redevelopment opportunity which could provide desirable acreage would be the Harding property. This area would lend itself to a key bike and pedestrian connection between 161 and Colonial Hills and could also accommodate nature trails and educational opportunities.

Future Park Planning cont.

C. Adding space to existing community parks like McCord Park and Linworth Park (where residential acquisition may allow for squaring off park spaces) or adding desired amenities to existing community parks.

D. Spaces that would provide passive, natural places for walking, hiking, and biking or for nature education and exploration.

E. An opportunity to add some of the desired amenities recognized in this process including a three season shelter, pickle ball courts, a sledding hill, multi-use trails, additional community garden space, and natural play opportunities.

It is our recommendation that no additional park acreage be added unless the appropriate operating funds can be dedicated to its maintenance. Worthington has high expectations for its park spaces and adding park acreage or amenities without resources for maintaining those additions could result in lower quality maintenance of our existing parks.

Maintenance Related Recommendations

As Commission Members reviewed the list of brainstormed projects in the various parks as a part of the process, it became apparent some of the recommendations were maintenance related and did not fit well into the other projects being considered. Many of the ideas were related to on-going maintenance or were issues typically handled by staff or contractors as a part of operations (the city has an annual operating budget which provides resources on an annual basis for daily operating functions as well as some smaller projects). One example is the removal of honeysuckle along the creek in Perry Park. These items were removed and put into a list of maintenance related recommendations for staff. Some of the themes from that which will be prioritized and monitored by staff, include:

1. Landscaping Improvements and Upgrades
2. Removal of Invasive Species/Park Boundary Management
3. Add/Replace Trees
4. Electrical Upgrades
5. Irrigation Upgrades
6. Small Building and Storage Shed Rehabilitation
7. Deer Population Management Issues

It is important to stress that maintenance of our existing parks is critical and although these projects are not being listed amongst our park planning recommendations, sufficient funding and resources to ensure high quality maintenance is critical to meeting the expectations of our residents.

Funding Options

The City of Worthington has a long history of funding park projects and investing in its popular and respected park system. However, it is clear that funding for approximately 80 projects as recommended in this plan is not readily available and has not been set aside in anticipation of these recommendations. This plan is going to require a significant investment and will likely need a combination of funding sources in order to move it along at a reasonable pace.

City Council approves a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) each year laying out five years of capital investment around the city. Over the past 11 years, the CIP has funded park improvements at an average of approximately $90,000 per year. It is the hope and recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission that City Council will recognize the value of the projects being recommended in this plan and will give priority to increasing the allocation. The Commission is not currently recommending a specific allocation each year, but rather a willingness to fund multiple projects annually in an effort to impact the quality of life of our residents by investing in our parks.

The City of Worthington currently has a Parks Improvement Fund, where funding from redevelopment and donations are collected. These funds go toward various improvements in the parks. Staff are currently working to increase awareness and utilization of this fund along with exploring the feasibility of a Parks Foundation that would provide a more formal, tax incentivized means for donations, estates, and other contributions to fund park improvements and this plan.

Funding Options Continued

Another means the City will explore in an effort to fund recommended projects is partnerships. Worthington has a variety of neighboring service providers along with several local businesses which have an interest in our mission and who are looking to engage with the community. We believe partnerships, like the one formed with the City of Columbus to construct the Godown Dog Park, can provide opportunities to move projects along more quickly. These partnerships may be formed with public or private sector businesses.

The Parks and Recreation Department has a Project Supervisor who continually assesses grant opportunities. The most recent example of this was funding for the West Wilson Bridge Road Multi-Use Trail through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). The projects recommended in this document will be reviewed annually to determine whether they may be eligible for various grant funding opportunities by the Project Supervisor.

Finally, consideration should be given to identification of additional funding for park improvements. There are many competing demands on the City's capital funds. In the event the City does not anticipate the availability of funds to complete the projects listed in this document within existing means, consideration should be given to providing residents an option to pay for those improvements through a new revenue stream. This could be done independently or in combination with other city initiatives. The Commission feels that the community places a high priority on parks and recreation and may support new revenue over indefinite delay of the plan's recommendations.

Conclusion

The Worthington Parks and Recreation Commission, an advisory body appointed by the Worthington City Council, has prepared with the assistance of Parks and Recreation staff these recommendations for park improvements. The long range planning process was thorough and involved significant public input as well as education and research. It is the hope of the Commission Members to make these recommendations to City Council in an effort to continue the great tradition of parks for the residents of Worthington and our visitors. Parks and green spaces not only provide recreation for Worthington residents, but they have been shown to enhance economic development, increase property values, improve health and wellness, and improve social connectivity and a sense of community. We believe all of these factors illustrate the importance of our parks and justify significant investments over the long haul to ensure they are well maintained, updated, and up to community standards. The Commission looks forward to working with City Council, staff, and our residents to achieve the recommendations of the plan through a consistent and methodical approach utilizing a variety of funding options.

Parks and Recreation Commission

Park Master Plan 2017

2017 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Michele Miller, Chair
Peter Calamari, Vice Chair
Dan Armitage
Laura Ball
Robert Burpee
David Kessler
Robert Wendling